

REPRESENTATIVE

RODNEY TOM

48TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

2003 SESSION REVIEW

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you — it was an enlightening and dynamic first legislative session for me. We wrapped up in June with many big wins for the citizens of Washington and our local communities of Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Medina, Clyde Hill, Yarrow Point and Hunts Point.

My goals from the start of the session were to create jobs by making the state more competitive, restore the public's trust in government and help create a world-class educational system.

In order to gain your trust, I knew government would have to share in the challenges of these difficult economic times. We passed a bipartisan operating budget that doesn't raise general fund taxes, the state's first comprehensive transportation plan in 13 years, and a capital budget designed to build up Washington's infrastructure and create jobs. We also made progress in the area of health care.

In addition, we passed related reform and accountability measures to ensure transportation projects are carried out quickly and efficiently, and to make it easier for employers to do business in Washington.

I hope you'll read on to learn more about what we accomplished this year. I welcome your questions and concerns. I'm also happy to assist you in your dealings with state government. Please contact me if I can help.

Sincerely,

Rodney Tom

Rodney Tom
State Representative



■ **OLYMPIA OFFICE:**

441 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

■ **TELEPHONE:** 360-786-7848, or
1-800-562-6000 (Legislative Hotline)

■ **E-MAIL:** tom_ro@leg.wa.gov

■ **COMMITTEES:**

Education, Assistant Ranking Republican
State Government
Technology, Telecommunications & Energy

■ **INTERNET MEMBER PAGE:**

<http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/tom.htm>

■ **LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION
ON THE INTERNET:**

www.leg.wa.gov

■ **STATE GOVERNMENT
ON THE INTERNET:**

www.access.wa.gov

RESPONSIBLE BUDGET PROVIDES CRITICAL SERVICES, ALLOWS STATE TO LIVE WITHIN ITS MEANS

With a state budget deficit approaching \$3 billion, I and other lawmakers insisted that government establish priorities and then make the choices necessary to achieve them.

In the end, a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers adopted a no-new-tax operating budget that focuses limited resources on our most pressing priorities and protects services for the truly needy.

The budget allocates nearly \$23 billion for state government operations through June 2005. Although the news stories have focused on budget cuts, the actual budget is \$480 million more than last biennium. The budget avoids drastic cuts in services for developmentally disabled and troubled youth. It protects health care services for children living at up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level, and provides a 75-cent-per-hour pay raise for home health care workers.

At the same time, the budget reflects my continued support for K-12 education. It provides pay increases for teachers in their first seven years on the job. The annual starting pay for Washington teachers will climb to \$30,000 in the budget's second year. Also, funding under Initiative 728, the class-size initiative passed by voters in 2000, will climb to \$254 per student, from \$212. Total K-12 funding will increase from \$5,367 per student to \$5,469 per student.

While the budget turned out about as well as it could have for Washington taxpayers, there are things I would still like to improve for teachers, local government and others. I and other lawmakers are committed to addressing those needs as our economy recovers and we're better able to make those important investments.



2003 SESSION REVIEW

REP. RODNEY TOM

48TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

CREATING A BETTER ECONOMY AND JOBS FOR FAMILIES

The 2003 session produced substantial reforms to improve our state's business climate and encourage employers to invest and expand job opportunities in Washington:

- Significant new investments in our transportation infrastructure and efficiency reforms to give us the most for our tax dollar;
- Tax incentives for new aerospace investments to entice Boeing's 7E7 assembly to Washington;
- Three important laws that change our state's water policy and help growing cities by offering greater flexibility to communities to respond to local needs;
- Reforms to the state's costly unemployment insurance and workers' compensation systems to ensure fairness and predictability.

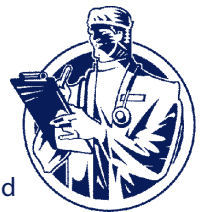
We all want excellent schools for our children, affordable health care for our families and seniors, and protection of our open spaces and pristine natural environment. A healthy, diversified and robust state economy will help us achieve the quality of life we expect. We still need to do even more work to continue to strengthen our economy and stimulate job growth, but the accomplishments of this session have finally put us on the right course.



HEALTH CARE FOR WASHINGTONIANS ON THE WAY TO RECOVERY BUT THERE'S STILL MORE TO DO

■ Prescription drug legislation

We made a step in the right direction. I and other lawmakers voted to pass prescription drug legislation that's designed to save the state money when it purchases medications for people who rely on government-funded health coverage. This represents a beneficial short-term fix. Our next goal will be to develop a long-term plan that helps seniors, but is careful not to move us further toward state-run health care. There is still more we can and must do for our seniors and that work should continue next session.



■ Efficiently providing health care coverage to low-income families

Another victory this session can be found in new effectiveness and cost-efficiencies for government health coverage. Reforming and redesigning the Basic Health Plan — that offers subsidized and unsubsidized health care coverage for low-income people without any federal funding — will make it more affordable to cover more Washingtonians (100,000 enrollees) without continued cost overruns for taxpayers.

■ Taking the preventive route to better fund key government services

Finally, and perhaps most important when you consider staying well to avoid costly health care services in the first place, there is the bill I introduced to outlaw smoking in public places. House Bill 1868 would have given local government more authority over enforcing no smoking in public places, prohibit designated smoking areas and increase fines for violations. I'll continue working on this again next session — it's critical to catch up with the health care curve and position the state to better fund critical services, including health care for those who can't afford it and K-12 education (the state government's paramount constitutional duty).

Speaking of getting and staying fit, please join me on Sunday, Sept. 14 for the Kirkland Triathlon. For more information, please visit www.racecenter.com/kirklandtri/. I look forward to seeing many of you there!

LOCAL CAPITAL BUDGET PROJECTS

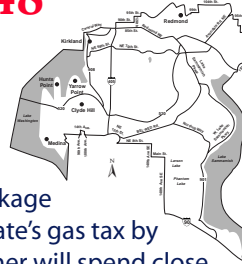
I and other lawmakers voted to pass a final capital budget in the 2003 legislative special session that brings home more than a million dollars of investment in the 48th District:

- \$180,000 for the Bear Creek Park Trail;
- \$500,000 for the Crossroads Community Center;
- \$200,000 for the Eastside Heritage Center;
- \$268,000 for the Pacific Northwest Ballet in Bellevue.

TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS SLATED FOR THE 48TH DISTRICT

The \$4.2 billion, 10-year transportation improvement package that boosts the state's gas tax by a nickel this summer will spend close to \$3.4 billion on highway projects and \$603 million on other forms of transportation, including public transit. I strongly support this transportation improvement plan and am pleased to see:

- Nearly \$360 million will go to alleviate gridlock on I-405 in and around Bellevue.
- More than \$500 million is dedicated to improving our community's most heavily trafficked roadways, including I-405, SR 520, SR 202 and I-90.



EDUCATION REQUIRES FOCUS AND CONTINUED FULL ATTENTION OF LAWMAKERS

Education remains one of the top reasons I asked you to send me to Olympia. Improving public education in Washington and creating world-class schools that prepare our children for the jobs of the future is a personal passion. Unfortunately, several bills were left on the block and much work went undone for K-12 education during the last legislative session: specifically, the **resolution to let the citizens of Washington decide whether to eliminate the supermajority needed to pass school levies**. Today's antiquated system for school funding will not deliver the higher standards we're placing on our students. We must move forward in finding new and creative means for both K-12 and higher education. I will push to resurrect this effort next session.



I'll also continue working to pass the **teacher housing allowance** bill that gives local districts, such as Bellevue, the option to help teachers in high-cost areas. I introduced it during the last session, but it did not make it to a floor vote.

I also realize the importance of the **levy rollback measure** to our local school districts and will continue working to find a solution next session. Our local school districts must be able to collect 100 percent of levy funds you the voters have already approved, and dedicate those dollars to improving education and assisting high-quality educators.

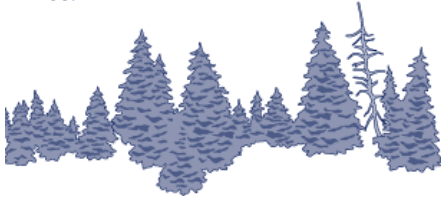
Rep. Tom speaks to pending legislation on the House floor.

KIRKLAND'S BRIDLE TRAILS STATE PARK TO STAY OPEN

A recent agreement between Washington Parks and Recreation and the Bridle Trails Park Foundation means we'll continue to enjoy Bridle Trails — a true jewel in our community.

Under the agreement, the Bridle Trails Park Foundation — a group of citizens in our area — will contribute a portion of the operating expenses. In 2003, the foundation will contribute 10 percent, eventually contributing 50 percent in 2007.

The community deserves congratulations for working together to keep the park open. In these tough budgetary times, it's important for the state to explore more innovative public-private partnerships to keep our parks and other facilities open. I appreciate and applaud the efforts of the Bridle Trails Park Foundation and its president Don Prince.



I'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you have questions or ideas about issues being addressed by the Legislature, let me know. You may also contact me directly via e-mail at tom_ro@leg.wa.gov. During the break between legislative sessions, I'm active in the community. Feel free to let my office know of any meetings or events that are scheduled to occur and for which you'd like my attendance or participation. I'm always interested in your opinions and questions and look forward to seeing many of you soon!

Name: _____

Address: _____
_____ and/or

E-Mail: _____

Comments: _____

2003 SESSION REVIEW

RODNEY TOM
REPRESENTATIVE
441 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
OLYMPIA, WA
PERMIT NO 92